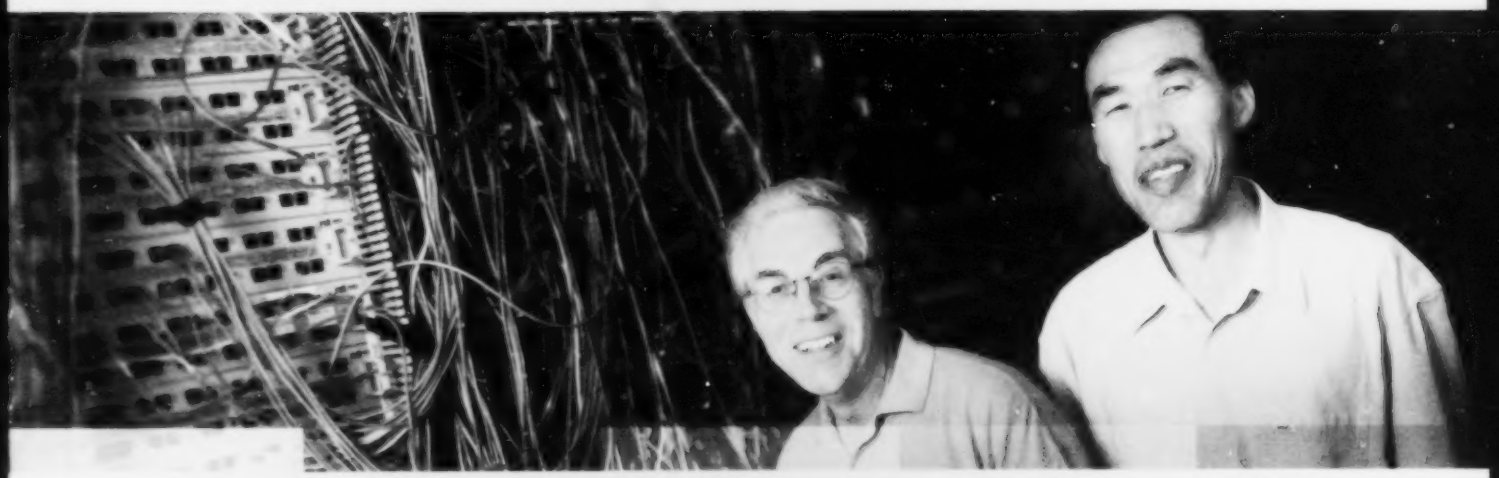

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program

The First Two Years: A Status Report

September 2005

NOVA SCOTIA
Office of Immigration

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Introduction

Why Nova Scotia Values Immigrants

In January 2005, Nova Scotia released its first immigration strategy with ambitious goals:

- to more than double the number of immigrants coming to our province
- to help immigrants settle, succeed, and stay - specifically, to increase our retention rate from 40 to 70 per cent

Communities that have welcomed families from other countries already recognize the cultural and social benefits of immigration. However, demographic and labour market realities make reaching our immigration goals even more critical.

First, Nova Scotia's death rate now exceeds our birth rate. Our province needs new families from other countries to reverse our population decline, to keep our communities thriving, to keep our schools open, and to create jobs.

Second, Nova Scotia anticipates a shortage of skilled workers in certain trades and professions. The province has several strategies in place, including a skills and a youth strategy, to address these labour force needs. At the same time, immigrants with the right skills can play a critical role in boosting economic growth, and ensuring Nova Scotians have access to the services they need.

Unique Needs

Based on economic and demographic realities, Nova Scotia's first priority is to attract

- more people with business experience who will create jobs by starting new businesses or helping existing businesses grow
- more health professionals, particularly specialists
- people with specialized skills to support the modernization of traditional industries and to work in emerging and growing industries
- people to fill unique community needs

The Challenge: Keeping Them

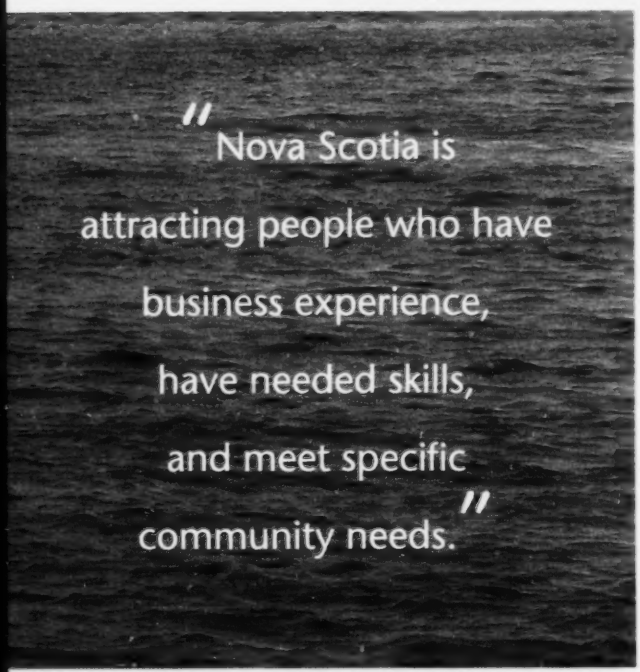
Research shows that immigrants hold Nova Scotia in very high regard, but often leave the province because they cannot find meaningful work. Further, in the Greater Halifax Region, while 95 per cent of businesses think we need to hire more immigrants, the same 95 per cent have never done so.

As a result, the Nova Scotia Nominee Program must

- attract immigrants with the backgrounds and experiences the province needs
- help them find the work, work experience, and services they need, so they succeed and stay for years to come

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program

Background
The purpose of the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Provincial Nominees (signed in August, 2002) is to increase the economic benefits of immigration to Nova Scotia, based on industrial and economic priorities and labour market conditions. It also recognizes the importance of encouraging the development of the Acadian and francophone communities.



The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is open to qualified business people, skilled workers, and other immigrants who meet community needs. These immigrants are nominated to the federal government, which conducts security and medical checks before issuing a Canadian permanent residency visa.

In December 2002, the province contracted Cornwallis Financial to market the Nova Scotia Nominee Program through their international network of more than 1,000 consultants; receive and screen applications; and attract employers to provide work experience. In this way the province can reach immigrants world wide without adding recruitment staff and without cost to taxpayers.

Attracting the People We Need
The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is currently open to immigrants who have business experience, needed skills, or who meet specific community needs.

For example, the province is attracting talented immigrants who are, or soon will be, working in research, technology, manufacturing, sales and merchandising, recreation and leisure, business services, and more.

The province is also attracting immigrants in health specialties, such as cardiology, psychiatry, organ transplant, and radiology; and in traditional, emerging and growth industries, such as farming, construction, international trade, hazardous materials, and the offshore. As well, boat builders, artists, business owners, volunteers, and others have been attracted to communities from one end of the province to the other.

Helping Newcomers Settle, Succeed, and Stay

Nova Scotia's economic nominees are the only ones in the country who are guaranteed mentorship and a management position, with pay, in a business of their choice. Each nominee contributes $100,000 to the business to cover the costs of a mandatory six-month (minimum) management contract, enabling the nominee to learn local business customs, markets, trends, and more. Having the immigrant cover the employment and mentorship costs also encourages businesses to hire them, and is a sign of the immigrant's commitment to stay and succeed in Nova Scotia.

Skilled workers are identified by employers themselves, who have available jobs they have not been able to fill from within Nova Scotia. This ensures that employers find the skilled workers they need, while Nova Scotians have first opportunity at skilled work.

All nominees must speak English. This will help them succeed at work and in community activities. As well, all nominees receive help and support through the Nominee Welcome Centre, which provides welcoming services such as airport pick-up, tours, and tutoring; landing and settlement advice on everything from banking to buying a home; and access to a secure web-based extranet that allows nominees to support and advise each other on all aspects of their new lives.

The Numbers Add Up To Success

Program popularity grows monthly

	July 1/03* - Dec. 31/03	Jan. 1/04 - Dec. 31/04	Jan. 1/05 - June 30/05	TOTAL
Nominees Approved**	21	159	158	**338**
Applications In Process	58	77	67	**202**
Applications Refused or Withdrawn	7	36	21	**64**
TOTAL APPLICATIONS	**86**	**272**	**246**	**604**

* Program start-up date.
** Received nomination certificate, awaiting federal or provincial paperwork, or in process of moving

The popularity of the program is growing monthly. Almost as many immigrants have been approved in the program in the first six months of 2005 compared to all of 2004.

Since 98 per cent of applicants are from families with an average of four members, attracting 338 nominees brings more than 1300 newcomers to the province. This year alone, Nova Scotia expects to attract about 1200 immigrants through this provincial program. In 2003, 1474 immigrants were attracted through all federal and provincial programs; therefore, attracting 1200 through the Nominee Program by itself highlights how important this program is to our goal of doubling the number of immigrants to Nova Scotia.

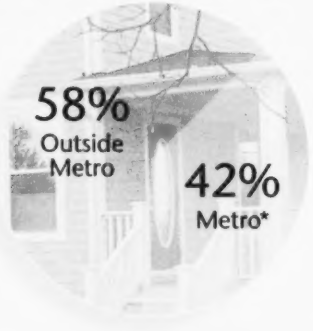
About 70 per cent of our nominees have business experience, and apply through the program's economic category.

Immigrants are arriving from around the world

Asia	285	Africa	10
Middle East	194	Australia	3
Europe	88	South America	2
United States	22		

Families are settling in rural and urban areas

Families have settled in 43 different communities across the province.



*Metro includes Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, Sackville, and Fall River

What Our Nominees Are Saying

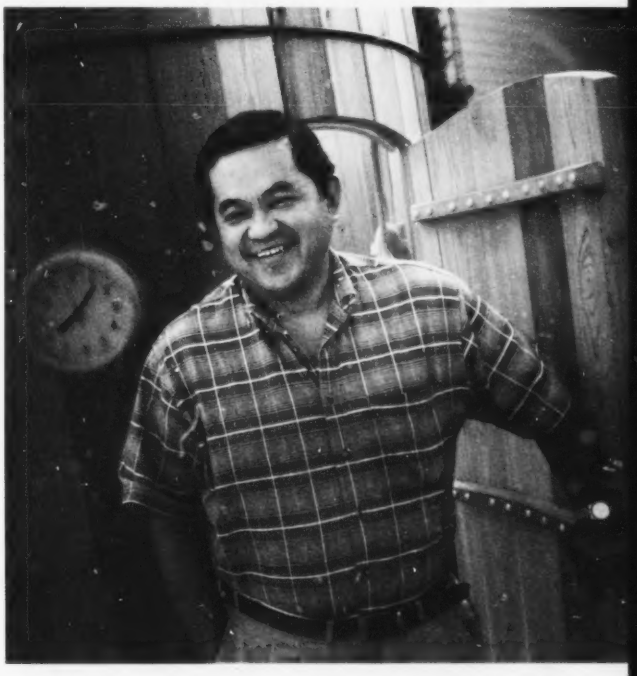
"We made the best decision to come here."
Michael Yu – Barrel Enterprises

Michael Yu was providing a good life for his family back home in Manila, Philippines. But he and his wife wanted more for their children. They wanted a safe, secure place where the future held real promise.

Michael proceeded to research his options world wide. His search of the globe lead him to Canada, and when he learned that the Nova Scotia Nominee Program could substantially shorten the immigration process, his quest became even more focused.

After applying to the program in May 2004, Michael came over for an interview two months later. While here, he checked out potential new neighbourhoods for his family, as well as businesses in which he could invest. By the end of that month, he got the news he'd passed the interview. The move was on.

By January of 2005, the whole Yu family had their permanent visas. Michael came to Nova Scotia in February to meet his new business partners and find a house, and by April they were unpacked and in their new homeland. (Michael admits that part of his plan was to get the family over quickly so they'd fall in love with Nova Scotia and its people before winter hit.)



Michael Yu
Barrel Enterprises
Lower Sackville

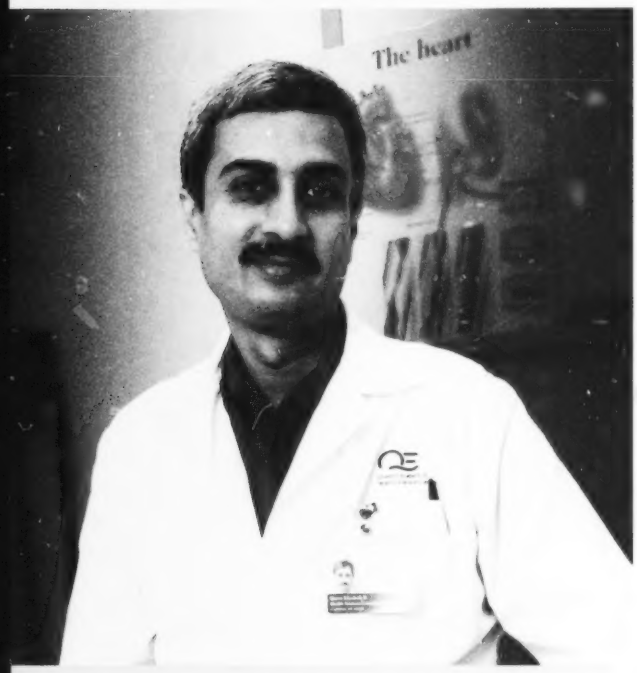
Today, Michael is a partner in Barrel Enterprises, a growing company that builds and sells barrel hot tubs, pools, saunas, wine cellars – even dog houses! – and more. As the company flourishes, it will create more jobs and more revenue for Nova Scotia.

www.barrelenterprises.com

What Our Nominees Are Saying

"This is a great place to live and a nice place to raise children."
Dr. Ata Quraishi

Dr. Quraishi was no stranger to Nova Scotia. A graduate of the University of Karachi's Dow Medical College in Pakistan, he did his Fellowship in International Cardiology in Nova Scotia from 1998 – 99. When the studies were over, he went home to practice medicine, but continued to think fondly of Halifax and Nova Scotia. The people were warm, the city was a vibrant seaport, and the winters (so he thought) were exceptionally mild.



Dr. Ata Quraishi
Cardiologist
Halifax

Many of Dr. Quraishi's friends had immigrated to Canada, and they encouraged him to follow. However, colleagues had told him the process could take two years. Then he heard about the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.

As a qualified, skilled worker, Dr. Quraishi moved through the process quickly. In just one year, he was granted landed immigrant status and received a job offer from the QE II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax.

Today, Dr. Quraishi is a practicing cardiologist at the Halifax Infirmary, where he specializes in angioplasty and cardiac catheterization. He is also a lecturer at Dalhousie University's Medical School where his knowledge and experience is being passed on to Nova Scotia's newest physicians.

"Halifax is everything you could hope for – all the amenities of a large city without big city drawbacks," says Dr. Quraishi. "The work is challenging and the people of Nova Scotia are magnificent. They are always ready to help."

Trained, professional people like Dr. Quraishi are vital to the future of Nova Scotia. They bring skills that are in short supply and pass their knowledge to other Canadians. They help build and strengthen an expanded sense of community in the city and the province.

His only disappointment is that the mild winter of '99, when he first lived in Nova Scotia, has not repeated itself. However, his children are making new friends and enjoying the chance to learn winter sports.

What Our Nominees Are Saying

"It was really remarkable how the people just welcomed us in."
Forbes and Yola Christie

Originally from Aberdeen, Scotland, Forbes and his family were living outside Boston in 2003. After a long career with two of the premier flute producers in the world, Forbes knew it was time to start his own flute-making business. He just needed to find the right location.

Why Nova Scotia? Forbes' wife Yola, just back from bringing lunch to an ill neighbour – the first of many signs that this family is doing more than just starting a business – tries to explain.

"We'd always liked the idea of Nova Scotia," says Yola. "But when we actually met the amazing people, and saw the lovely old houses here in Shelburne, it definitely became our number one choice."

Nova Scotia's abundance of wooden flute musicians, the proximity to US and European markets, the lack of competitors in the region, and the nominee program provided the practical reasons. Yola quickly got the immigration process started, working with a lawyer and talking to residents about the project.

Forbes and Yola Christie
Windward Flutes
Shelburne

"It all went very quickly," says Yola. "We couldn't have waited to start our business, so the speed of the program was a real incentive."

Now that the process is complete, they are giving back by setting up and running a company that will eventually train and hire up to five employees. They have purchased a beautiful, 150-year-old house and, with the help and expertise of local suppliers and builders, have built a workshop beside it. And they have invested in tools and machinery, all purchased in Nova Scotia.

But their return support for their new home town goes beyond the economic. They've already brought in a strong community spirit their neighbours have come to enjoy and depend upon. "There are a lot of innovative people in Shelburne," says Yola, "from the amazing chef at the restaurant next door, to the local theatre director. They are a big part of the reason we feel so at home in Nova Scotia."

Celebrating Our Employers

Immigrants will only succeed and stay in Nova Scotia if they are able to find meaningful work.

Thanks to Nova Scotia's economic category, this is the only province in Canada where nominees are guaranteed a management employment contract from a business of their choice upon their arrival. Of course, this opportunity can only be provided if employers are willing to commit to bringing newcomers into their businesses, and familiarize them with Nova Scotian business practices, markets, and other tools for success.

Knowing that it takes about nine months for nominees to have their federal paperwork approved, the first priority was to attract nominees. Now that those efforts have succeeded, the province is intensifying its efforts to attract more business mentors.

Province-wide efforts are now being made to make more businesses aware of the intellectual talent they could access through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. These efforts include direct mail, business and web advertising, and information sessions.

Thanks to Our Business Mentors Willing To Make A Difference!

AG Brown and Sons
Abridean Inc.
AGST Canada Inc.
Bartlett Plastics
Boardwalk Property Services
CarteNav Solutions
Dexter's Auto
Eastern Automotive Co. Ltd.
Greenwood Lane
Himmelman Holdings
ISL Internet Solutions
K & C Holdings Ltd.
Maritime Cordage Ltd.
Medusa Medical Technologies Inc.
Metals Economics Group
Prince Argyle Management
Quality Cameras & Computers
Rosebush Flowers Ltd.
TARA
The Vault Jewelers Inc.
Vision Tech Consulting
A & H Realty
Adventure Motors
Barrel Enterprises
Bebbington Industries
Cameron Corporation
CE Executive Offices Ltd.
Dugger's Mens Wear
eCRM Networks Ltd.
Healthy Choice Vending
Interhabs Ltd.
JJ Levangie & Sons Restaurants
Kornova Investments
Maritime Steel and Foundries
MCJ Restaurants Ltd.
Opa Restaurants Ltd.
Progress Communication
Rondel Limited
Skye Lodge Motel
TC Howatt Inc.
Venda Wash Coin Laundry
Xpert Business Brokers

An additional 34 employers have hired immigrants in the skilled worker category, which benefits the employer, the immigrant, the Nova Scotia economy, and our health care system.

What Our Employers Are Saying

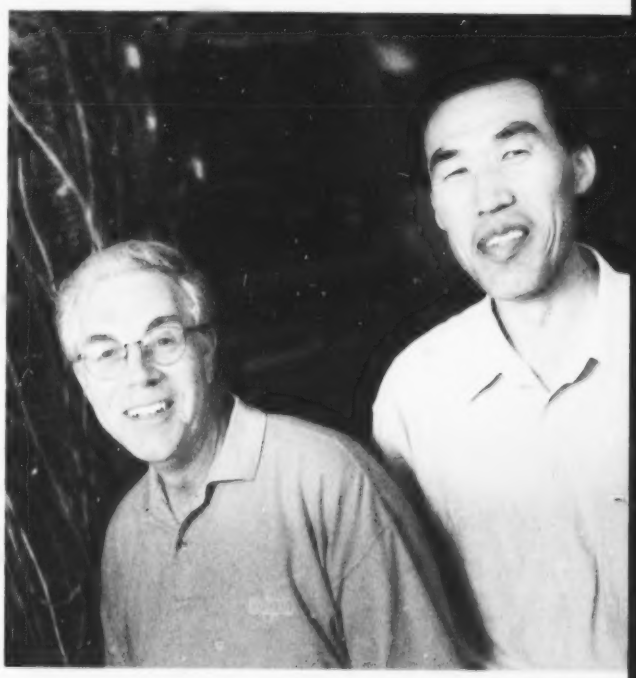
"It's a win-win situation."
Wayne Bussey and Dr. Hee Kook Park – TARA

As president and CEO of Telecom Applications Research Alliance (TARA), Wayne Bussey knows that Nova Scotia needs the best and brightest minds available to help local industries keep developing and succeeding, so we can keep our economy strong.

That's why he was a willing business mentor in the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.

On behalf of the province, Cornwallis Financial finds immigrant candidates whose skills and expertise fit with mentor companies, such as TARA. The mentor company then receives financial support to employ the candidate for at least six months. During that time, the candidate is introduced to companies and organizations where his or her skills would be an asset.

In TARA's case, the candidate was Dr. Hee Kook Park of South Korea. Dr. Park holds a Ph.D. in physics and a Bachelor of Science in astronomy. He is one of the world's leading experts on the manufacturing of microchips.



Wayne Bussey and Dr. Hee Kook Park TARA Halifax

Since his arrival in the spring of 2005, Dr. Park has been making many valuable contributions to TARA.

"At TARA, we get the benefits of a brilliant mind, and the province gets the benefits of not only Dr. Park's brilliance, but that of his son as well," says Wayne. (Dr. Park's son is going to study electrical engineering at Dalhousie University in September, 2005.) "We're delighted to be working with Cornwallis, and to be hosting Dr. Park. They have done a first-class job all the way through."

Dr. Park's expertise has been noticed by member companies of TARA, as well as Dalhousie University's research labs. It will only be a short time before Dr. Park finds permanent employment in Nova Scotia.

And what does Dr. Park say? "We love Halifax and Nova Scotia. It's beautiful and the people are very kind and helpful."

Next Steps

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is meeting its original objectives of attracting immigrant families who can contribute to the economic and cultural well-being of the province. In fact, since so many immigrants want to come to Nova Scotia through the program, the province has asked the federal government for permission to issue more than the 200 nomination certificates permitted each year in the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement.

> "So many immigrants want to come to Nova Scotia, the province has asked the federal government to increase the number of certificates the province can issue."

This high level of interest is encouraging; however, since the Nova Scotia Nominee Program was developed by the Office of Economic Development before the immigration strategy was in place, the Office of Immigration is now reviewing the program with three goals in mind

- how to make the program accessible to immigrants with a broader range of backgrounds and experiences
- how to ensure the program is fair and provides value to immigrants for fees paid
- how to strengthen accountability measures

Program Accessibility

The province's immigration strategy recognizes the benefits of opening the nominee program to immigrants with a wider range of backgrounds and experiences. For example

- International students who already know the community, understand the job market, have graduated with Nova Scotia credentials, and have good language skills.
- Family members of immigrant business owners.
- Entrepreneurial immigrants who may wish to start a business immediately upon their arrival.

The Office of Immigration's new program director will lead the work of examining the merits of adding international student, family business, and entrepreneurial categories. An independent study, conducted for the Office of Economic Development, will be the starting point for consultation on the entrepreneurial category.

Further work is also needed to encourage immigrants to settle in Acadian and francophone communities. Immigration staff will consult La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse on a partnership that will target more French-speaking nominees.

Value to Immigrants

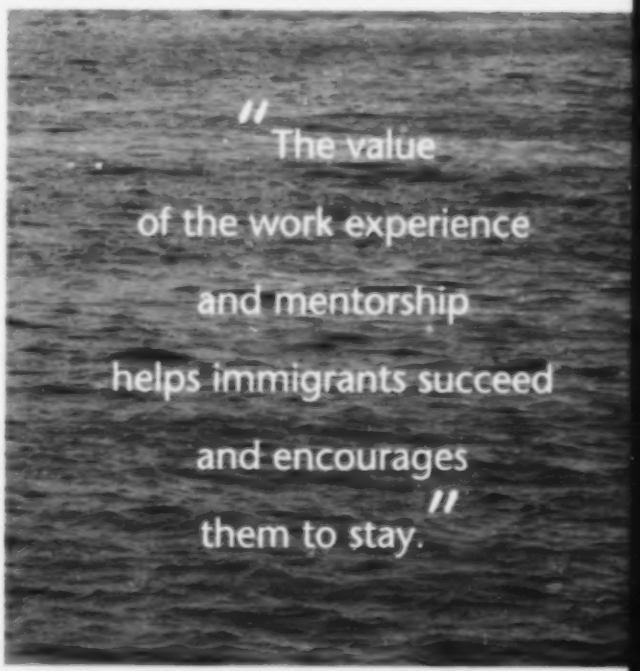
Fee Review

Immigrants coming to all parts of Canada pay various fees to agents, lawyers, banks, and governments. In fact, fees paid to international consultants have a direct impact on a province's ability to attract immigrants, because the consultants are more likely to aggressively promote provinces where fees are high.

In late fall, an independent review will be conducted on Nova Scotia's fees to ensure they are fair to immigrants and competitive with those in other provinces.

Value of Work Experience, Mentorship

Immigrants in the economic category pay $100,000 to a business (paid in two installments, at the beginning and end of the contract), in return for mentorship, work experience, and a salary. The Office of Immigration wants to ensure that the value the immigrant anticipates is, in fact, provided.



Starting later this year, the Office of Immigration will interview the immigrant and the business mentor mid-way through the employment contract, and again at the contract end, before the business receives the final payment. This will help ensure that the immigrant is receiving the mentorship they need to succeed and stay in Nova Scotia after the employment contract ends.

Stronger Accountability Measures

The Office of Immigration will follow up with economic category nominees within six months of ending their employment contract. They will do the same for nominees in other categories within six months of their landing in the province. This information will be used by the province as part of its retention monitoring, and also by Cornwallis Financial as part of their accountability framework with international agents.

Updated statistics will appear on the website monthly, as well as the names of approved mentor businesses. An annual status report will also be released so all Nova Scotians can see the progress toward the immigration strategy goals.

Finally, a formal evaluation of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program will be conducted six months prior to the end of the current Canada-Nova Scotia Nominee Agreement in 2007. The evaluation will be made public and will influence future decisions about the program.

Conclusion

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is just one tool for bringing immigrants to the province. The Office of Immigration is also working with immigration partners, regional development authorities, community groups, and others on ways to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants to the province through federal programs. It is only through these combined efforts that Nova Scotia will reach its immigration goals of more than doubling the number of immigrants coming to the province, and ensuring more of those who come will succeed and choose to stay.

For more information on the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, go to: www.novascotiaimmigration.com or contact the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, P.O. Box 2311, Halifax, NS - B3J 3C8, (902) 424-5230, or 1-877-292-9597.

Nova Scotia
NOMINEE PROGRAM